UN

UNITED NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1995/1039
18 December 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I would like to inform you that on Friday, 15 December 1995, the Eritrean military forces waged a flagrant and naked aggression and piracy against the Yemeni island of Hanish Alkubra, violating by this action the sovereignty and territorial lands and waters of the Republic of Yemen and threatening the security of the international navigation in the Red Sea region.

I enclose herewith an Official Communiqué in Arabic issued by the Government of the Republic of Yemen and request that this be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdalla S. AL-ASHTAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Statement by an official source in the Government of the Republic of Yemen

On Friday evening last, 15 December 1995, Eritrean military forces carried out a treacherous act of aggression and an open act of piracy against Yemen's Greater Hanish island, thereby violating the sovereignty of the Republic of Yemen over its soil and its territorial waters and threatening international navigation in the Red Sea region.

The Eritrean authorities had already revealed their aggressive intentions by addressing a warning to the Yemeni nationals and military garrison on Hanish island, on Saturday, 11 November 1995, to the effect that they must halt work on a development project being implemented by a company there and must leave the island. The Government of the Republic of Yemen established high-level contact with the Eritrean Government with a view to containing the situation, and it affirmed the solicitude of the Republic of Yemen for its relations with Eritrea and its genuine desire to resolve any differences with it concerning maritime boundaries by means of dialogue and peaceful negotiations, in accordance with international law and international covenants. Subsequently, a number of meetings were held in Sana'a and Asmara. The most recent of these was the meeting held in Eritrea under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of our country, and the Eritrean Minister for Foreign Affairs. At that meeting, the Republic of Yemen again affirmed that it was prepared to engage in dialogue and to sign a memorandum of understanding with Eritrea concerning the principles for bilateral negotiations on maritime boundaries and stating that, in the event no solution was reached, recourse could be had to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice. This was an expression of the good intentions of the Republic of Yemen and of its solicitude for the distinctive historical relations between the two countries with a view to safeguarding security, stability and peace in the Red Sea region. Agreement was reached during those meetings that any dispute should be contained and that the dialogue should be continued after the holy month of Ramadan. Regrettably, however, instead of adhering to the agreement reached, the Government of Eritrea launched its flagrant aggression against Yemen.

Expressing its regret and its strong condemnation of the fact that Eritrea, a neighbouring country, should have committed this flagrant act of aggression against Yemeni territory and should have jeopardized security, stability and international navigation in the Red Sea region, the Republic of Yemen asserts its legitimate right to defend its sovereignty over its soil and its territorial waters and to repel any attack on them. It holds the Eritrean Government responsible for all the consequences of this treacherous aggression and calls upon it to halt such aggression immediately, to remove its effects and to abide by dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law and international covenants, so as to preserve relations of good-neighbourliness between the two countries.